

Howard County Consumer Affairs Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes for April 1, 2015

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm

- Present: Richard Green, Ashlyn Hood, Jerome Jackson, Katherine Bronstein & Jill Bussey
- Absent: Sue Rogan, Felicia West

Minutes of the March 4, 2015 were approved upon correction to the date of the Howard County Housing Fair.

Administrator's Report

Becky updated the Board on pending legislation before the General Assembly:

- HB313 / SB298 - These bills have been amended to allow spot delivery of vehicles to occur but include a number of consumer protections. Advocates are still working with the committees to improve the bills.
- HB782 / SB408 – These bills provide for the calculation of interest to be paid on a tenant's security deposit to be on a monthly basis instead of quarterly, making it easier for both landlords and tenants to make the calculation at the end of the tenancy.

Becky reported that the Money Matters Fairs was successful with a larger turnout than last year.

The County Executive has nominated Ashlyn Hood to serve a second term on the Advisory Board. Ashlyn also provided a new e-mail address. Becky will update the Board's roster and distribute with Board minutes.

Budget Discussion

The Board discussed various items that could be personalized with OCA information and given away at events. Becky will report back at the next meeting with information on: stylus pens and items that can be attached to the back of cell phones such as cleaning buffers or pockets.

New Business

Becky asked the Board to consider planning an event to be held / project that will culminate on National Consumer Protection Week next March. Two possible projects were discussed:

- Education campaign related to spot delivery of motor vehicles. This would flow out of any legislation that is passed this year. The Board could engage auto dealers in the County in assisting with the campaign.
- Partner with other organizations, including the Howard County School System, in a project aimed at educating parents about cyber security issues affecting children. Other organizations would provide info on human trafficking and bullying while the Board/OCA would cover ID theft and other consumer scams. The project may include a train the trainer event for teachers, principals, faith based organizations, etc.

Board members are to consider these projects and bring any other ideas for discussion at the next meeting.

Upcoming Events / Announcements

- Howard County Housing Fair – April 11 at Long Reach High School – OCA will participate in a landlord-tenant workshop and be available for one-on-one counseling.
- Money Smart Week – April 18 to 25.
- Green Fest – April 18 at Howard Community College
- FIRN sponsored naturalization ceremony, Banneker Room of the George Howard building on April 18 from 10 to 12. OCA will have materials about the office in Spanish, Korean, Chin and Chinese available at the ceremony.
- Jill advised the group of action taken by the American Immigration Lawyers Association to stop H&R Block from improperly offering immigration services

Meeting adjourned at 8pm.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD WILL BE ON MAY 6 AT 7:00 P.M.

OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM

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